

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest  
For the period April 2009 – February 2010  
Submitted for General Board Consideration April 2010**

Total Number of Congregations: 151  
Total Church Membership: circa 35,000  
Total Participating Church Membership: circa 21,000  
Average Worship Attendance: circa 9,000

The Christian Church in the Upper Midwest is engaged in a significant journey of re-imagining what it means to be “Disciples Together,” and we intend that this venture will provide the learning that will help the Region’s leadership develop a new understanding and vision of what it means to be Church, “a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world,” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Pertinent information that impacts the above journey includes but is certainly not limited to the following.*

- The Regional Staff is comprised of two full-time clergy staff, one full-time camp and conference lay minister, one full-time lay coordinator of ministries, two part-time adjunct staff persons, and a minimal number of camp staff and part-time employees.
- The Region continues to provide significant resources to the entire church through Disciples Mission Fund giving. As the third largest Regional amount of financial support in terms of total dollars, the UMW gave over \$838,000 in 2009, a slight dip of approximately \$21,000 from the prior year.
- The Regional mortgage debt on the Christian Conference Center lodge addition has been reduced from \$420,793 on 12.31.2007 to \$175,234 on 12.31.09.
- The accumulated Line of Credit debt was reduced from \$190,000 on 01.01.2009 to \$130,000 on 12.31.2009.
- The Regional Board called Rebecca and Stephen Haney as new church planters in Rochester, MN. The finances for this new church start were provided in part by the remaining resources and equity of the former congregation of the now closed First Christian Church, Rochester.
- The summer camp and conference program continues to be a strength of the mission and ministry of the Region. During the summer of 2009, 998 young persons and adults (from five-year-olds to age 92) participated in one of the 24 camping experiences. The Region continues to enjoy the benefits of its policy that no child will be denied participation in a summer camp based on their inability to pay the camp registration fee. Many congregations throughout the Region have provided a pool of monies from which those needful situations can be underwritten.

- Congregational transformation continues to be a crucial ministry of the Region. A Congregational Transformation Task Group is available to provide counsel and guidance to the approximately 50 congregations throughout the Region engaged in congregational transformation. These congregations are utilizing numerous programs and models of transformation, including a Regional model funded by the Oreon E. Scott Foundation.
- A revitalization of the Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Unit has been an exciting accomplishment of the Region. The Unit met in retreat in February 2010 to identify ways the Unit might provide authenticity to this mission imperative of the church.
- The Region, in cooperation with congregations, hosted dozens of visits by John Campbell Nelson, our Global Mission Partner in Indonesia.
- There are approximately 25-30 congregations at some point in the search and call process at any given point in time.
- The Region continues its historic practice of providing scholarship assistance to seminarians under the care of the Region's Ministry Commission.

*How is the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world?*

Disciples in the Upper Midwest Region are intimately involved with such agencies as AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy), the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa, and a myriad of other agencies and NGOs throughout the Region. Through these ministries and others, Disciples are intimately involved in voicing their understanding of the Gospel's message to a fragmented world.

Ministry can be such a spiritually rewarding endeavor, and yet, it also seems that many who serve in ministry can experience feelings of anger, rage, lament, and depression. The Upper Midwest Region is engaged in a concerted effort to address this malady with every resource available. Our understanding is that if the pastor isn't healthy, chances are the congregation he/she serves won't be healthy either. The Region has established a Clergy Care Task Group whose primary reason for being is to help clergy focus on ministry to self and self-care, and to discover where they are on their own spiritual journey. Numerous Clergy Day Apart gatherings have been structured to help the pastor find this health and well-being. The Task Group is also available to congregations to help the membership determine ways they can assist in assuring sound pastoral spiritual and physical health. The Christian Conference Center provides free mid-week retreat accommodations for any clergy of the Region who wish to spend a few days in spiritual meditation, reflection and prayer.

In the past year, nearly 500 UMW Disciples were engaged in helping to bring wholeness to a fragmented world through involvement in mission trip work and interpretation opportunities both at home and abroad.

In part, the Region's emphasis on congregational transformation involves a discernment of God's call to mission and ministry, and a deepening sense of spirituality.

This journey can truly enable congregations, and by extension the Regional Church, to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.